

## **BOARDS ADOPT UPDATED JOINT STATEMENT ON PAIN MANAGEMENT**

**Minneapolis, MN.** The Minnesota Boards of Medical Practice, Nursing, and Pharmacy recently updated their Joint Statement on Pain Management. The Boards adopted the first Joint Statement on Pain Management in 2004, which was reaffirmed in 2009, to give guidance regarding untreated or inadequately-treated pain. In 2015, the Boards again reviewed the issue of pain management to offer added guidance regarding appropriate prescribing with emphasis on the critical balance between pain management and the potential misuse of controlled substance medications.

Pain management and opioid prescription drug abuse are significant issues in healthcare today. There is a critical balance between preventing opioid misuse and managing pain. When appropriately used, opioid pain relievers have an important role to play in the management of pain. However, misuse of these drugs can cause serious problems. In the United States, 46 people die from a prescription opioid overdose each day. In 2013, the leading cause of death due to injury was drug overdose with 51.8% being related to prescription drugs. "Pharmacists need to balance their professional duty to fill prescriptions with their responsibility under federal law to ensure that opioid prescriptions are filled for legitimate medical reasons," stated Cody Wiberg, Pharm.D., M.S., R.Ph., Executive Director of the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy.

Ruth Martinez, MA, Executive Director of the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice added, "Adequate knowledge of pain management and pharmacotherapeutics, effective communication with patients, family members and other health care providers, and a commitment to ethical, compassionate patient care are essential to responsible opioid prescribing." The Joint Statement is meant to offer guidance to healthcare providers in the management of pain and to provide resources where practitioners can obtain additional information.

The Boards jointly promote appropriate prescribing, dispensing, and administration of controlled substance medications and encourage healthcare providers to work cooperatively and effectively to manage the dimensions of pain and minimize prescription drug misuse. "It is incumbent upon Minnesota nurses, pharmacists, and physicians to work cooperatively to effectively address the use of opioids and the dimensions of pain management. This joint statement is a result of work by the three licensing boards because competent comprehensive pain management requires this interdisciplinary approach," said Shirley A. Brekken, RN, MS, Executive Director of the Minnesota Board of Nursing.

The 2015 *Joint Statement on Pain Management* may be accessed on each board's website:

Medical Practice - <http://mn.gov/boards/medical-practice/>  
Nursing - <http://mn.gov/boards/nursing/>  
Pharmacy - <http://mn.gov/boards/pharmacy/>